

23 October 2025

Dear Parents & Carers

Thank you for all your support this term, it has been a hugely successful 7 weeks. We are proud of students' efforts and hard work. Half term will bring rest for everyone; this week is for enjoying the rewards of their efforts together with staff in College.

## PILOT OFSTED INSPECTION

On the 14th and 15th October, a team of 5 inspectors visited Heathfield to carry out a *pilot inspection* under the new framework at our invitation. On the 14th October the Senior HMI for the South East also attended as quality assurance. It was a typically robust examination of all aspects of the College, exactly as in a published inspection. The [new gradings are different](#) and do not relate to previous wording:

- The starting point is Expected Standard; inspectors then decide if any area 'Needs Attention' or can be declared "Strong".
- Schools awarded Strong are not given points for improvement (as with the previous Outstanding judgement).
- A small number of schools may be deemed to be "Exceptional" (beyond outstanding) if an aspect has been sustained over time and had a "transformational effect" on young people, this is currently predicted to be a rare occurrence nationally.
- There is no overriding one-word judgment; strengths and areas of focus are shown in a colour-coded report card.

**Outcome:** As this was a pilot there is no published report. The information below simply reflects feedback from inspectors. Matching their experiences and observations against the [toolkit](#) inspectors felt the school was at least Strong in all areas and Exceptional in two. Safeguarding does not fall under the same grading as other areas as it is either met or not met. The inspection team were clear it was Met stating: *there is a strong culture of safeguarding*.

This valuable exercise in self-evaluation will be used in planning the next iteration of the College's Strategic Plan with governors in the new year. The information delivered through feedback is not a formal inspection outcome. The last inspection for Heathfield was in May 2023, under a normal cycle the next inspection would therefore be expected in 2026-27.

**Influence:** Following the inspection, senior leaders at the College were privileged to be asked to feedback to the inspection team about the experience and inform the plans for how the new framework will be implemented next month.



Distinguished School



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Headteacher: Ms Caroline Barlow B.A. (Hons)

**Remembrance and Poppies:** After the half-term break, the College will be observing Remembrance with a series of meaningful activities, including assemblies, tutor time reflections, and representation at a local community event. To support this year's Poppy Appeal, poppies and other commemorative items will be available for students. Sixth Form students will be visiting tutor groups to distribute them. A small **cash donation** will allow students to take part and show their respect if they wish to do so. We encourage all students to get involved as we come together as a community to remember and reflect.

**Enrichment Week 2026:** This fabulous event in our calendar is already in planning for 2026. If you haven't yet signed up to Enrichment Week the deadline is 3 November 2025. The brochure is on this link [https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page\\_id=2339268](https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?page_id=2339268).

**Traffic and Parking:** Thank you to drivers who have taken on board our request regarding our voluntary one-way system, parking around the College and on the zig zag yellow lines. Please refer to my [previous letter](#) of the 10 October if you need to check any of this.

**Heathfield Youth Hub:** We are delighted that the Heathfield Youth Hub is now operational and thriving with many Heathfield students attending and benefitting from the local provision. We are working closely with the Hub to try and maximise support for our young people and their families. They are looking for more adult volunteers to support Heathfield Youth Hub's evening sessions. They also have a young leaders programme where young people help to run peer-led activities, games and sports for younger teenagers. If the attached poster is of interest, then please do get in touch with them.

**Free School Meals & Pupil Premium Funding:** Please take a look at our Free School Meals information sheet which provides details about Free School Meals, Pupil Premium funding and how registering for Free School Meals can not only save you money but help support the College for all pupils (currently a school meal costs £2.90 so over the school year that is a potential saving of £580). <https://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/FSM-Information-September-2025.pdf>

Thank you again, for all your support. I wish you a calm and enjoyable half term break.

Yours sincerely



**MS C BARLOW**  
Headteacher

## OFSTED FEEDBACK: PILOT INSPECTION OCTOBER 2025

Aspect	Inspectors Comments and Feedback
Inclusion	<b>There is clearly an established inclusive culture throughout this warm, ambitious community.</b> It was seen in lessons, in social time and described as “muscle memory” for staff. Strategies are established and monitoring is rigorous, adaption made where needed, the needs of each individual student is understood and cared for, impact is evident. There is a genuine collaborative approach with expertise across the school valued. <b>Leaders’ actions have a transformational impact on how well pupils achieve and thrive across all areas of school life,</b> and have ensured that they feel they belong within the school community. Inspectors felt the College showed exceptional embedded practice in this area.
Achievement	<b>Pupils here do well; that is not by chance.</b> Outcomes show at KS4 and KS5 pupils overall and disadvantaged and SEND do really well. Outcomes have gone up again in 2025, <b>attainment has improved year on year.</b> In terms of destinations and next steps, students are consistently well prepared, the programme is well thought through.
Curriculum, teaching and learning	Evidence of capable subject knowledge, pupils can articulate understanding, ask questions and are encouraged to do so. Very powerful examples of teachers clearly checking understanding of what all pupils had secured. <b>Highly effective teaching is embedded</b> across subjects and year groups. <b>Relationships are strong.</b> There is a strong correlation between plans, outcomes and lessons. Those who need support receive it with clear impact. Professional development is very focused and clearly targets subject knowledge, practice was very strong across most subjects.
Attendance & Behaviour	<i>“Leaders and staff have established a culture that is highly conducive to learning, in which pupils of all ages flourish”</i> absolutely describes this school. It is not just responsive it is proactive. <b>There is clear evidence of self-discipline and respect. There is a sense of “This is who we are”.</b> Reminders are gentle, done positively and calmly which sets the tone. Support is continually refined to help students meet leaders’ high expectations. Attendance is rapidly improving. Inspectors stated this is a <b>warm, aspirational community where everyone is pulling together.</b>
Personal Development & well-being	Students liked their specialist PHSE teachers. They were clear on healthy and unhealthy relationships; the vast majority could talk about their learning across age groups and evidence developing understanding. <b>Opportunities beyond the curriculum, Enrichment Week and wider opportunities are well considered</b> and have an intention to bring cultural experiences, local, national and international. There is careful thought about the breadth of offer. It is pre-emptive and anticipates student need. <b>The pastoral offer is very effective.</b> There is impact. <b>It is making a positive difference to pupils; they understand and are respectful of others.</b> Student leaders have a passion for their role.
6 <sup>th</sup> Form	There is a high-quality programme tailored to individual students with very deliberate focus on work related experiences and readiness for work. Students are well prepared for the future. <b>Teachers are skilled at delivering the curriculum in a way that enables students to achieve well. Pupils are confident in what they are taught and how.</b> There is strong, robust subject knowledge used effectively Leaders are analysing the impact of teaching and learning on outcomes and making changes, providing support as needed. <b>Achievement is above national. Students achieve consistently well.</b>
Leadership and Governance	<b>Leadership is driving improvement. It is deliberate and at all levels:</b> it’s collaborative. Leaders really know the school well and are proactive: when they spot something, they act and [quote] <i>“Wow... things happen”!</i> There is clear evidence of impact. <b>Leaders are developing staff expertise and equipping staff to make a difference.</b> Staff and governors feel part of the school and valued; they are very positive about the school. There are high expectations, staff appreciate it and they stay. <b>Staff are flourishing</b> due to what Leaders do. Governors are very enthusiastic and credible. They are very aware of their statutory responsibility and are reflective in their practice. School leaders’ actions have had a transformational impact on the outcomes and experiences of disadvantaged pupils, these pupils achieve and thrive.